

Ownership and less cost for scientists and physicians

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It annoys doctors around the globe trying to read an article that a colleague scientist has written, the abstract is posted in the Internet, and they are faced with a cost of \$34.00 plus for a single article. More disconcerting yet is for those writing the articles having to ask permission to a publisher to allow their own articles to be in a course syllabus they are ministering. Authors do not own the rights of their own brainchild! This is changing; the intellectual property should belong to the ones producing it. The open access journal platform solves the economical and the ownership issues.

Publishers holding the power of printing took advantage of the scientific world, rightly so for over two centuries, when printing was necessary and costly. Now they experience their rights challenged. It is time for them to define a novel model of earning income, instead of continuing to exploit the already overburden scientist with costs and demands of peer reviewing. Scientists are facing shortage of resources for research and should not be asked to pay high costs to report and read scientific articles. It is life saving that scientific information be readily available throughout the world in an affordable manner.^[3] Is it possible to defer this cost to the ones profiting the most from the work of scientists and doctors?

The publishing industry is being challenged by the burgeoning role of the Internet in all corners of life, including the scientific one. There is a cost for having an article in digital format; however, the cost to make it available worldwide has decreased exponentially. Even this small cost should be taken away from the scientists producing the information, mainly from the ones in less affluent areas of the world. As healthcare dollars are more and more held by the medical manufacturing industry, pharmaceuticals, and equipment, they have taken an increasing role in medical education and communication.

This happens in several ways across medical specialties. Commercial interests heavily support congresses organization and attendance. Educational and scientific grants, albeit with specific interests, are also being provided by the industry. These are partially regulated by our societies and our educational institutions, however, the stabilization and regulation of the influence of the industry money in medical care, education, and law making is yet to happen. Manufacturers are starting to take advantage of the power of the Internet communicating scientific findings. Recently a single manufacturer has supported the birth of a scientific journal spanning all medical specialties. A method to reward peer reviewing and selection of best quality is also proposed.^[1]

The birth of SNI Stereotactic has been sponsored largely by the industry. However, financial support for producing the articles in many instances is lacking. Further support is necessary to give opportunity for scientists across the world to have their publications widely available and for free. The era when scientists purchased expensive prints of their own articles to send to colleagues as a courtesy because they were neither available nor affordable in many countries is over. Now, the only cost is to produce a “printer ready article,” well edited and usually peer reviewed at no or minimal cost to the Internet publisher.

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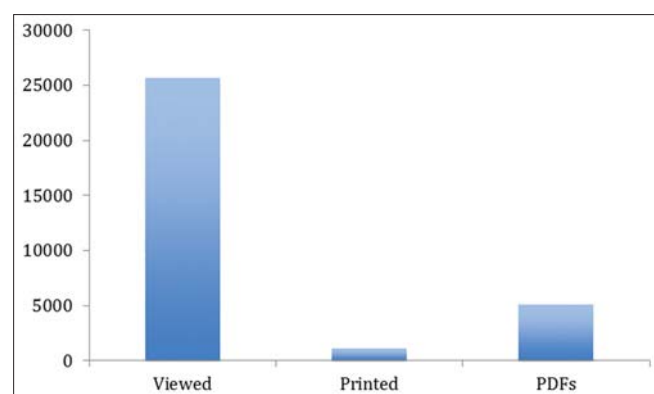


Figure 1: SNI Stereotactic distribution of readers that viewed the article, printed and saved in PDFs, showing the growing interest in digital reading – natural tendency to see articles in PDF format

Traditional printed journals now represent wasted resources, as they crowd our offices and libraries, provoking needless destruction of forests around the world.

The world scientific community is increasingly reading digital [Figure 1]. The ones still reading scientific journals in paper, that is, 21% of visitors to SNI Stereotactic, do so by tradition, preferring to hold the paper or the book

in their hands because they did so throughout their lives. The youth, however, have already adopted the digital communication media, not only for texting, now causing the teenager's disease "thumb tenosynovitis,"^[2,4] but also for studying and entertainment. Digital communication is just a natural part of the youth life, as cars, phones, and modern technology permeated our way of living. *Surgical Neurology International* has nicely taken advantage of this progress, now read in over 200 countries with 18000 monthly readers. It is time for the industry pitch in to remove the costs of publishing from the scientists even further. We especially thank Elekta, Inc. and Brainlab, Inc. for supporting the birth of SNI Stereotactic in 2012.

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